

Nunn solved crisis with plant

Editor's note: This is the third of a four-part series on Provo Canyon history.

By JOSEPHINE ZIMMERMAN
The Daily Herald

PROVO — This is not the first time in history an energy shortage has caused problems for businesses and industry.

In the late 1800s, some of the richest gold and silver mines had been discovered in harsh and forbidding territories in Colorado, Utah and Nevada.

To power these mines, lighting companies were organized in Montrose, Durango, Ouray and Telluride, Colo. As the ore became poorer, it was necessary to put concentration mills near the mines.

Power to operate these mills came from steam engines, and mounting fuel and transportation costs forced many of the mines into bankruptcy.

In 1880, Lucien L. Nunn, a dynamic lawyer and promoter, pitched his tent in the brawling mining town of Telluride. He turned to mining and became fairly well-to-do while managing the Gold King Mine.

But he soon encountered financial problems. The mines were isolated at an altitude of 11,000 feet and could be reached only by burro and wagon up rough mountain roads.

As the rich ore diminished and only low-grade ore remained, it became necessary to mine larger quantities of ore. Wood-burning, steam-driven mills processed the ore, but it wasn't long before nearby timber became scarce and the price of getting and hauling coal up the mountain rose to \$50 per ton.

Nunn investigated various forms of power production, including what was then a "crackpot theory" of alternating current dreamed up by George Westinghouse. Nunn called on his brother, P.N. Nunn, an engineer, who familiarized himself with alternating current and the problem of its generation.

Armed with \$100,000 in gold coins, he persuaded Westinghouse to produce an AC power generator and an AC motor for the mill, but he stipulated that he would not be responsible for their success or failure. P.N. Nunn stayed with Westinghouse and helped design the machinery.

L.L. Nunn built a crude prototype at the Ames plant near the Gold King Mine and was successful in transmitting alternating current 2.6 miles — an unheard-of distance in those days to transmit electricity. The plant's success prompted L.L. Nunn to search for other hydro sites.

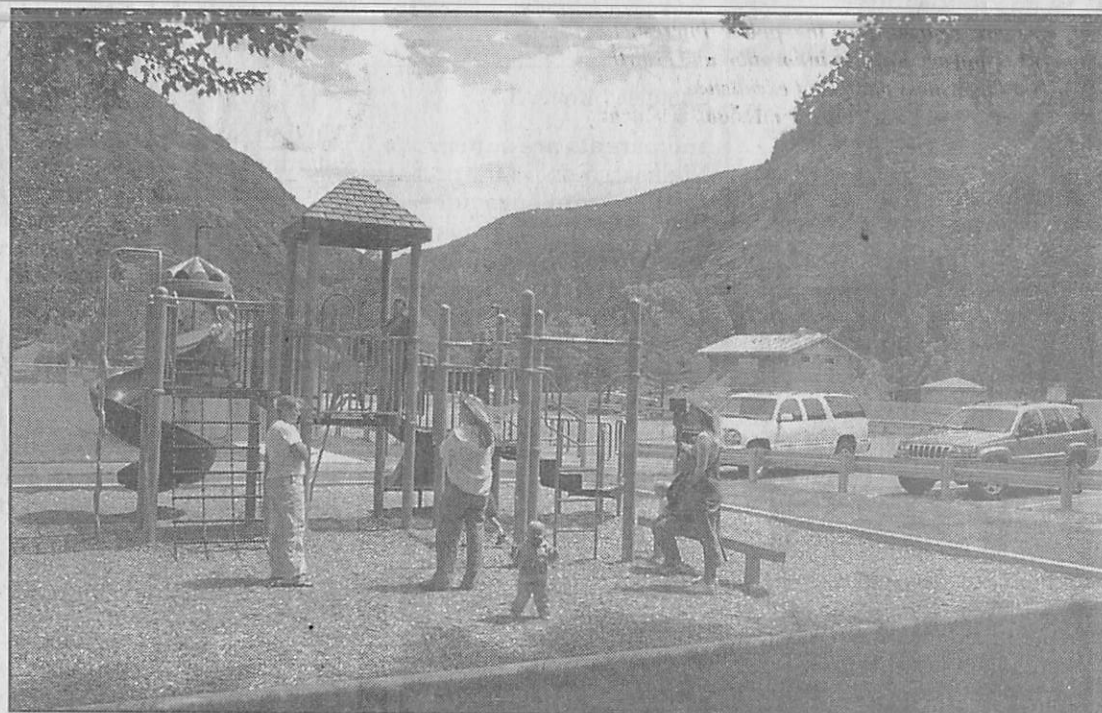
In 1897 he built a plant on the Provo River. Construction of the plant was not without controversy. Word spread that an 80-foot dam was to be built and someone recalled a disaster in Box Elder County resulting from a broken dam and the Johnstown flood of 1889.

By June the controversy reached the city council, and speakers were vocal in opposition. Some said the dam would depreciate property and that farmers depending upon water would suffer loss through evaporation from the reservoir.

County records show that Telluride Power Transmission Company was granted a franchise to erect and maintain electric transmission lines over all roads and highways under jurisdiction of the county. Stipulations were that the company could not interfere with private travel or ditches, and if Telluride sold light to the inhabitants of Provo, it should furnish electric current to 30 incandescent lights in the county free of charge.

Nunn's plant resulted in the first 44,000-volt transmission line in the United States.

The 32-mile hike to the booming gold-mining camp at Mercur was charged Jan. 7, 1898, and Mercur was the first completely



KEVIN LEE/The Daily Herald

Changing over time: Families play in Provo Canyon's Vivian Park. Lucien L. Nunn built the mining industry's first electrically equipped mine and mill in Provo Canyon in 1897.

electrically equipped mine and mill in history.

Through the years, Nunn's transformer building in what is now Nunn's Park was destroyed, and only some of the stones remain.

Nunn discovered that another problem was finding trained personnel, thus the Telluride education program was started.

Nunn recruited "plucky frontier boys inured to the country" who wanted a try at the new art. They were taken to the school for two years under the severest terms and worked all hours. They learned all

about electricity at the Telluride Institute. Trainees were in demand as the new industry developed.

Nunn traveled the country recruiting men to train at his school and work in his plants. In 1903, the Nunn brothers established Olmstead Institute, one of the most advanced electrical schools in the United States.

Nunn went on to build several plants in northern Utah and to interconnect them with a 200-mile line. He also investigated Bear River and Bear Lake.

Utah Power and Light was organized in 1912, and

purchased the properties of Telluride Power and eventually Knight Consolidated Power Company and Idaho Power and Transportation Company.

Nunn wrote a short chapter in American history that changed a whole civilization and altered the life and habits of a nation.

Even before Utah Power purchased Telluride Power in 1913, Nunn had begun turning control of his electrical empire over to others. Hard work had undermined his health. By 1905, he weighed only 103 pounds, yet he lived on for another 20 years.

Law shields volunteers from suits

By AMY K. STEWART
The Daily Herald

PROVO — City volunteers will no longer be vulnerable to lawsuits — particularly SLAPP lawsuits — because of a new city ordinance.

"Volunteers will have the benefit of having the city pay for their defense if they are named as a defendant in a lawsuit — if they're acting within the scope of their appointment as a volunteer," council attorney Neil Lindberg said Tuesday night.

The change in the ordinance came after discussion by residents who serve on the city's volunteer commissions and boards. Volunteers voiced concerns that they were susceptible to SLAPP while doing their duties. Lawsuits defined as SLAPP — "strategic lawsuits against public participation" — are generally used by developers to silence opposition.

City code already addresses claims and lawsuits against city officers and employees. The council's amendment of the ordinance includes city volunteers.

During comments Tuesday night, Provost neighborhood chairwoman

GRANT

Continued from A1

and parents are supportive," Nielson said.

The grant provides for enrichment activities such as reading, literacy, mathematics, the arts, and sports and recreation.

Carson said the grant will also help keep existing programs in place.

"We're going to continue with some programs, like the Santaquin Fine Arts Academy," Carson said. "We also presently do chorus and drama clubs, and we're going to extend that

hopefully to some visual art programs and possibly some pottery."

The CLEAR program's design is to serve 2,881 students in helping to increase graduation rates, English proficiency and literacy, as well as to reduce crime, violence, gang activity and drug use.

Local businesses and public service organizations, including Payson and Spanish Fork police, are partnering with the district to help students succeed in the CLEAR program.

Families will be able to participate in the pro-

grams as well. Parenting classes, family ESL classes and career counseling will be provided as part of the after-school programs.

The district is beginning a search for a project manager and is accepting applications.

"We're looking for someone with organizational skills, an ability to pay attention to detail (and) someone who knows our school system and understands how it works," Nielson said.

Jennifer Minnich can be reached at 344-2558 or jminnich@heraldextra.com.

KIDS EAT **FREE** EVERY WEDNESDAY!



Free Ice Cream, Sopapillas & Tortillas
Lunch Specials Served Daily
Next to Movies 8 in Provo

www.cougarblue.com

Introducing AT&T Shared Advantage

Unlimited local wireless calling
between plan members.

1500 minutes to share.

Get 2-5 phone lines.

One account. One bill.

Plus, get up to \$200 cash back

It's like getting 2 **FREE** phones